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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 006711

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/31/2015

TAGS: PREL PGOV PTER PHUM KPAO EG IZ

SUBJECT: BUILDING SUPPORT FOR IRAQ'S CONSTITUTION: EGYPT

REF: A. STATE 158419

- 1B. STATE 158420
- 1C. STATE 160094 (NOTAL)
- 1D. CAIRO 6673 (NOTAL)

Classified by Charge Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) In conjunction with the Secretary's August 27 call to Egyptian President Mubarak, the Charge delivered ref A and B demarches on the Iraqi constitution to Presidential Spokesman and Advisor Soliman Awad. Awad welcomed the USG points and promised to share them with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Soliman and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit. Following up with Awad August 31, the Charge shared ref C talking points, sought an update on GOE response to our earlier demarche, and again requested GOE public support for the Iraqi constitution process. Awad shared that, after his August 27 conversation with the Secretary, President Mubarak had instructed Egyptian Intelligence Chief Soliman and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit to make phone calls to key Iraqi Sunni figures. Those calls were made, Awad said, and the feedback that came back was concern over the revised text in the draft constitution dealing with Iraq's Arab identity. Awad said that Mubarak's private response had been that this issue needed to be resolved in a way that "showed respect for all Iraqis." (But Awad added that Iraq was, of course, an Arab nation and that Sunni concerns should be addressed.) Appropriate changes to that language would help the situation tremendously, Awad added. Responding, the Charge shared post's understanding that changes to the language in question were already being discussed by key parties in Baghdad. Awad was encouraged by the news, and appeared receptive to Charge's request for positive GOE public statements on the constitution.

12. (C) During an August 30 meeting with MFA Cabinet staffer Alaa Hadidi poloff shared ref A/B/C talking points on Iraq's constitution and requested that Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit make positive public remarks on the process and the document. Hadidi confirmed that Minister Aboul Gheit had yet to take a public position on the constitution. Hadidi repeated GOE complaints over current constitution language dealing with Iraq's Arab character and expressed familiar Egyptian neuralgia over supposed Kurdish and Shia separatist ambitions.

13. (C) Post also delivered ref A/B/C demarches to senior Arab League officials on several occasions this week, encouraging Secretary General Moussa to be more forthcoming in support of Iraq's constitution and the political process spelled out in UNSCR 1546. The consistent response, echoed in Moussa's recent public statements, has focused on constitution language on Iraq's Arab identity.

14. (C) Comment: Iraq's Ambassador to the Arab League, Raad al-Alusi (protect) has been helpful in keeping us informed about Egyptian, Arab League, and Iraqi Sunni views on the constitution. Alusi, a Sunni close to former PM Allawi, has echoed to us the same complaints as Moussa and the GOE regarding constitution language on Iraq's Arab identity. He told us August 31 that Kurdish objections would likely prevent the present language from being amended, but that a new sentence may be added noting that Iraq had been a founder of the Arab League. Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari, Alusi said, had called him that morning to instruct him not to make any public comments about this issue, as sensitive discussions in Baghdad were underway. End comment.

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